

Samuel Milligan Mill
(Water Power Grist Mill)
Milligantown, Westmoreland County, Pa.

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PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA
District No. 4 of Pennsylvania

Historic American Buildings Survey
Lawrence Wolfe, District Officer (Up to April 16, 1936)
Lamont H. Button, District Officer
119 E. Montgomery Avenue, Pittsburgh, Pa.

Samuel Milligan Mill (Water Power Grist Mill)
Milligantown, Westmoreland County, Pa.

Owner: John N. Graham, R.F.D. #2, New Kensington, Pa.

Date of Erection: About 1830.

Architect: Unknown, if any.

Builder: Samuel Milligan.

Present Condition: This mill is in an excellent state of preservation with the exception of the outside water wheel which is rapidly deteriorating. The building is different from its original appearance only in that it has been reshingled, new clap-boards have been put on and possibly the extensions beyond the main frame were subsequent alterations. Also there was a wheel house, now gone, which entirely covered the water wheel.

Number of Stories: Three.

Materials of Construction: Foundations are of local sandstone or freestone. Framing is of hand-hewn oak. Floors are wide boards, tongued and grooved, also of oak. Roof was evidently originally shingled with hand-split shakes. The local carpenter, Robert Oliver Laughlin, affirms that he removed the original siding or weather boarding in 1898, which was composed of white pine, one inch boards, eight to twelve inches wide and up to twenty feet long. At that time, he put on the present mill siding and also reshingled the roof.

Other Existing Records: The Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey has gathered some history concerning this mill from the descendants of the builder, notably Reverend F. A. Dumm, Belle Center, Ohio. These records were made in 1935 by Charles M. Stotz of the Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey.


Additional Data: Milligan's Mill, as it is known in the vicinity, is situated on Little Puckety Creek, east of New Kensington, Pa. It was built by Samuel Milligan in what was then the town of Milligantown, also named after Samuel Milligan. He was born in 1769 near Carlisle, Pa., and was married in 1802 and settled on a two hundred and fifty (250) acre tract which included the site of the present mill. The mill was built for the son, Jamieson Milligan, who was born in 1804. The mill

Additional Data (Cont'd.): was built about 1830. The mill was run by an over-shot wheel and the water was brought through a race a quarter of a mile from a dam which impounded the water of a tributary to Little Puckety Creek. A further race also about a quarter of a mile long extended from this dam on up the valley and joined with the Little Puckety Creek, so that it was possible to conserve the water from two streams. Even with this amount of water there were times when it was insufficient to run the mill. However, when water was abundant due to rainfall or spring freshets, the mill ran night and day. The level of the water in the dam was maintained in the fore-bay through a tight flume.

The husk or assemblage of gears which transmit the power to the stones is for the most part of wood and in good condition. Some of the joinery is most interesting, particularly the spokes of the large horizontal drive wheel. There are six spokes composed of three through timbers. These three timbers were notched to intersect in the same plane inside of the large wood shaft. The mortises into the shaft were chiselled large enough to permit the insertion of these through timbers, and their subsequent articulation entirely within the shaft. When they had all fit into the one plane, wedges were driven into the larger mortises to make all tight and rigid. The teeth on this wheel were of separate pieces of maple boiled in paraffin or some similar lubricant.

The two projecting areas of the mill, outside of the main framing, were probably not original because they were of sawn lumber. All of the wood used in the construction of this mill was out from the Milligan farm.

The historical data above was obtained from the Western Pennsylvania Architectural Survey, a project of the Buhl Foundation under the direction of Mr. Charles M. Stotz, A.I.A., Bessemer Building, Pittsburgh, Pa.


Lamont H. Button, A.I.A., District Officer, W.P.A.
Pennsylvania District No. 4
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